

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

March 21, 2002

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you prepare for your meeting with President Toledo in Lima on March 23, we believe that the time has come for the United States to actively work with Peru in clarifying the U.S. government's knowledge of human rights violations and acts of violence in Peru over the last two decades. On November 27, 2001, the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission officially requested your assistance in obtaining expedited declassification of U.S. documents relating to these issues.

Peru has recently lived through a dramatic period of political turmoil and transformation, including President Alberto Fujimori's resignation in November 2000, Vladimiro Montesinos's arrest due to corruption scandals, and the free and fair election of President Alejandro Toledo in 2001.

A critical part of the democratic reform process in Peru was the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to consider human rights violations committed by government security forces and armed insurgency groups over the past 20 years. Transition President Valentin Paniagua signed decree 065-2001 PCM establishing the Truth Commission on June 4, 2001. President Toledo affirmed his commitment to support the Truth Commission by signing decree 101-2001 PCM on September 4, 2001.

We believe the consolidation of democracy in Peru is key to US national security interests not only in Peru but throughout the region. We also feel the United States government has an obligation to provide the most complete public accounting possible of what US agencies know about human rights violations in Peru and about the role of both the Peruvian security forces and insurgent groups in these abuses. On June 25, 2001, the U.S. Senate approved Resolution 107, which called on the United States Government to cooperate fully with the Peruvian Government to bring to justice former Peruvian officials involved in... illicit activities. Agencies of the U.S. government have begun assisting Peruvian investigations, including the January 7, 2002 release by the U.S. State Department of 38 declassified documents in response to a request from the Peruvian Congress's Townsend Commission investigating Vladimiro Montesinos. We commend this support that your administration has already given to the consolidation of democracy in Peru and petition its continuation.

In the past, the U.S. government has provided important financial assistance to truth commissions in Latin America. It has also lent support by coordinating expedited interagency declassification reviews and providing declassified information for Truth Commissions in both El Salvador and Guatemala. These special efforts, which avoided the time-consuming process

Page -2-

mandated by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), helped provide critical information on human rights violations in a timely manner, which significantly aided the work of these commissions. Authorizing an expedited interagency declassification review in response to the Peruvian Commission's request would therefore be consistent with prior U.S. practices and U.S. policies supporting the consolidation of democracy, human rights and peace in Latin America. We urge you to direct the establishment of an expedited interagency process that would search for and review all US government records pertaining to the human rights cases specified by the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which the Commission will soon determine.

We believe the material reviewed for declassification should include but not be limited to diplomatic cables, embassy reporting, intelligence agency reporting, finished policy and intelligence documents, audio and video tapes, electronic messages and other computer records. We ask that the agencies required to review the documents include the NSC, CIA, Department of Defense, State Department, Justice Department and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). We urge you to apply to this material a standard of review that will ensure the maximum possible disclosure. We also request the preparation of an index of all relevant material that is not ultimately declassified.

Our objective in making this request is to assist the Peruvian people in the process of reconciliation and consolidation of democracy that they have so courageously undertaken. That process requires that the facts be known and acknowledged so that these crimes will never be repeated. The United States government, as a friend of the Peruvian people, should do everything possible to make this information quickly available in support of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, so that it has sufficient time to review and incorporate the material into its findings (which must be presented by mid-2003.)

We appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

*Patrick Leahy*

Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator

*Christopher J. Dodd*

Christopher J. Dodd  
United States Senator

*Russell D. Feingold*

Russell D. Feingold  
United States Senator

*Paul Wellstone*

Paul Wellstone  
United States Senator

*Robert G. Torricelli*

Robert G. Torricelli  
United States Senator